



“THE BARCELONA DECLARATION”
BRIDGING THE ICT SKILLS GAP IN THE EU

**RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION, THE SKILLS
AND MOBILITY TASK FORCE, THE ICT SKILLS MONITORING
GROUP, AND OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES**

*INTRODUCED AT THE COMPTIA “STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS” CONFERENCE
BARCELONA, 22 – 24 OCTOBER 2001*

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As the global economy becomes increasingly digital, the competitiveness of the European market in turn becomes more dependent on the availability of skills in information and communication technologies (ICT). The number of ICT jobs in the EU will grow to about 13 million in 2003, and some studies estimate that the EU will fall short of that need by up to one million professionals, resulting in billions of Euro of lost income across the European market.

To meet this challenge, the EU must support the ICT training industry in leveraging new and existing education, training and life-long learning strategies. The ICT training industry in Europe strongly urges the European Commission and other decision-makers to consider the following recommendations to help keep the European market competitive and encourage fair competition in the world-wide digital economy:

- **Integrated Approach:** The most powerful tools to address the ICT Skills Gap include technical training, skills assessment and certification products and solutions. However, addressing the long-term issues also requires an end-to-end infrastructure that includes technical and managerial skills mapping, job descriptions and career path planning, job placement systems and financing solutions, and opportunities to enhance lifelong skills development.
 - **Stakeholder Partnerships:** ICT skills standards and career paths are most effectively built through stakeholder partnerships that facilitate industry, education, and government participation, and must include those stakeholders that will employ this newly skilled workforce.
 - **Flexible Solutions:** To keep pace with rapidly changing technologies, effective ICT training and certification programmes must be broad-based and highly flexible, incorporating up-to-date research data to ensure that professionals meet current and future industry needs.
 - **Global Standards:** ICT training and skills development should be based on industry-driven, globally approved and universally accepted standards.
 - **Update and Maintenance:** Any ICT skills assessment or certification programme must be robust, secure and dependable to provide required confidence. To assure this, ICT certifications are to be updated and maintained globally in co-operation with stakeholders.
 - **Adaptable Programmes:** Workforce development programmes must build core ICT skills that are easily adaptable to dynamic demands and expectations across job roles, industries, countries and regions. Both the programmes and the trained professionals must have the flexibility and agility necessary for the industry to meet quickly changing needs.
 - **Utilising Existing Resources:** Effective solutions to the ICT Skills Gap leverage the existing knowledge, experience and energy of the commercial training market, and stimulate private and corporate investments that can advance public goals.
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COMPTIA RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 24 OCTOBER 2001

Comments by Mr Juan Chozas Pedrero, General Secretary of Employment,

Spanish Ministry of Labour and Social Relations

I share the schemes and the ideas included in the “Barcelona Declaration”. The work that the Heads of State and Government have set themselves on the medium-term (until 2010) entails an enormous challenge and a liberalisation effort for our economies and the elimination of the barriers and legal and administrative difficulties. Our objectives for the near future are full employment and the improvement of the working and life conditions.

It is evident that this cannot be accomplished by focusing only on the behaviour of the public sector. Without the integration in society of the social partners and the companies it will be simply impossible that our human resources, the European men and women, reach the levels of training - specially in ICT - that present times demand. In the next years this training will be a necessary requirement so that we don't run the risk of social exclusion.

If we intend to advance towards an integrated market, and that the European citizens (students, workers, unemployed, old age pensioners, housewives...) feel that their employment opportunities are really in a Europe without frontiers, we will not only have to improve our training opportunities and the opportunities for life long learning. We will also need common recognition systems that are accessible to all in a common European market. For this reason, the request for flexibility, adaptability and the commitment to participate by all people involved as a consequence of the Barcelona Conference seems to be a suitable formula. This is maybe the only formula to overcome the lacks that Europe still drags regarding ICT training and therefore the surest way to success.
